

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 09167 161522Z

53

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6495

INFO AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9167

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF US CITIZENS FROM PDRY

REF: CAIRO 9120

1. EMBASSY HAS NOT YET MADE SYSTEMATIC EFFORT TO DEBRIEF TORHAM AND KOPP BECAUSE OF THEIR (PARTICULARLY KOPP'S) EMOTIONAL STATE. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING INFO HAS EMERGED FROM FREE FLOWING CONVERSATIONS AND IS PROVIDED FOR DEPARTMENT'S BACKGROUND. IT SHOULD NOT BE USED PUBLICLY, SINCE SOME OF FACTS MAY HAVE TO BE CORRECTED VZATER.

2. KOPP AND TORHAN SAW EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME ON SEPT 14 AS THEY WERE BEING SHAVED IN PREPARATION FOR RELEASE. KOPP SAID THAT, DURING FIRST 3 WEEKS OF IMPRISONMENT, HE HAD BEEN MOVED EVERY FEW DAYS TO DIFFERENT FACILITY CONTROLLED BY ARMY INTELLIGENCE. ON FEB 14, 1974, HE HAD BEEN MOVED INTO "THE OVEN", A 9X9X9 FOOT CEMENT BLOCK BUILDING WITH A TIN ROOF FULLY EXPOSED TO THE SUN AND AIRTIGHT EXCEPT FOR 2 SMALL OPENINGS NEAR TOP. HE HAD BEEN KEPT THERE UNTIL JULY 27, 1974 AND MANAGED TO SURVIVE ONLY BY LAYING GACE DOWN ON THE FLOOR AND BREATHING THROUGH CRACK UNDER DOOR. HE WAS ALLOWED TO GO OUT TO THE BATHROOM 5 TIMES A DAY. SMALL AMOUMNTS OF FOOD HE DESCRIBED AS "GARBAGE" WERE INSUFFICIENT, BUT YEMENIS HAD BEEN UNEXPECTEDLY SCRUPULOUS ABOUT KEEPING ACCOUNT OF MONEY THEY HAD CONFISCATED FROM HIM AND HE WAS ABLE TO PURCHASE MILK EACH DAY. A NUMBER OF INNOCENT PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 09167 161522Z

HAD HAD CONTACT PRIOR TO ARREST WERE ALSO ARRESTED AND TREATED IN

EQUALLY INHUMAN WAY. HE IS STILL PARTICULARLY GRIEVED AT HAVING HAD TO WATCH TWO YOUNG HOTEL CLERKS SLOWLY DIE IN ADJACENT "OVEN" DURING THIS PERIOD.

3. ON JULY 27, 1974 KOPP SAID HE WAS TRANSFERRED FROM "OVEN" TO FATAH PRISON WHERE INTERROGATIONS BEGAN AGAIN, BEGINNING WITH HIS CHILDHOOD AND SAME QUESTIONS BEING ASKED REPEATEDLY. FOR FIRST TIME, HOWEVER, HIS INTERROGATOR (AHMED) WAS RELATIVELY CIVIL. DURING THIS PERIOD, WHICH INCLUDED "CALCULATED STARVATION", HE WAS NO LONGER PERMITTED TO PURCHASE MILK AND OTHER ITEMS FROM OUTSIDE. FOR UNEXPLAINED REASONS ON OCT 27, 1974, HE WAS MERCILESSLY BEATEN AND RESPONDED BY PUNCHING DIRECTOR OF PRISON IN THE FACE. FOLLOWING THAT INCIDENT HE WAS SURPRISED TO NOTE THAT HE WAS TREATED WITH MORE RESPECT. A CONSTANT IN THE QUESTIONING WAS ACCUSATION OF SPYING FOR USG. HE FINALLY EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO SIGN ANY STATEMENT THAT THEY WISHED AND HE CONCOCTED AND SIGNED A STORY THAT ENDED WITH STATEMENT THAT "I AM AN AGENT FOR THE CIA". IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE WAS TREATED ALMOST COURTEOUSLY AND GIVEN EXTRA FOOD AND BOOKS. KOPP DID NOT GIVE DATE OF SIGNING OF FALSE CONFESSION, BUT IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN IN LATE 74 OR EARLY 75. FROM THEN ON KOPP SAID TREATMENT WAS MERCURIAL WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION AND COURTESIES MIXED WITH INTERROGATION AND NASTY TREATMENT. HE HAD ALMOST LOST HOPE HE SAID OF EVER LEAVING PRISON ALIVE. ALTHOUGH HE HAD RECEIVED SPECIAL RATIONS OF MILK FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, FIRST NOTIFICATION OF RELEASE WAS AT 1800 SEPT 14 AND WITHIN 50 MINUTES HE AND TORHAN WERE ON EGYPTIAN AIRCRAFT.

4. KOPP, WHOSE PASSPORT WAS CONFISCATED, SAID HE HAD RECEIVED VALID VISA FROM PDRY IN KUWAIT. FROM THAT TIME ON HE BELIEVED HE WAS UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY SOUTH YEMENI SECURITY AGENTS. TORHAN SAID HE HAD RECEIVED 5-DAY AIRPORT VISA UPON ARRIVAL IN ADEN.

5. TORHAN SAYS HIS IMPRISONMENT WENT THROUGH PHASES. DURING FIRST PHASE INTERROGATIONS HAD BEEN FAIRLY GENTLE, FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL MONTHS OF ISOLATED IMPRISONMENT. THEN HE WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO INTENSIVE INTERROGATIONS WHICH INCLUDED PHYSICAL ABUSE, AFTER WHICH HE WOULD BE SENT BACK INTO ISOLATION. TORHAN SAID HE TOO HAD SIGNED (AT UNSPECIFIED DATE) A "CONFESSION" THAT HE WAS CIA AGENT. DURING INTERROGATIONS HE HAD BEEN ASKED MANY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAIRO 09167 161522Z

QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS COIN COLLECTING ACTIVITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

6. ALTHOUGH THEY PROVIDED NO SPECIFICS, BOTH MEN CLAIMED OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS INCLUDED A BELGIAN, GREEK, SWEDEN, DANE AND TWO BRITISHERS. EILTS

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